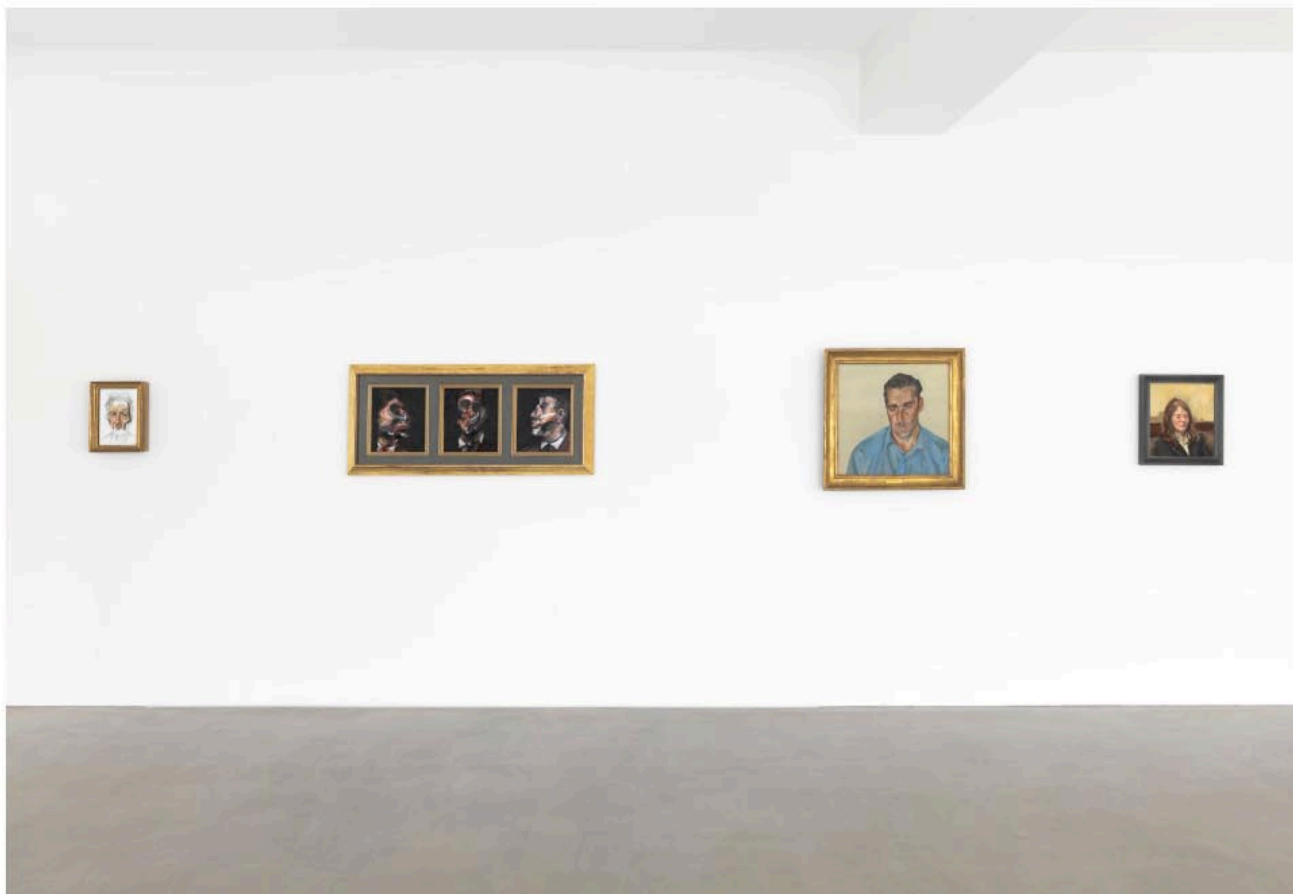


## ART IS ALIVE

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## LONDON PAINTERS AT ORDOVAS

27 February 2018



Following its critically-acclaimed presentation in NY, Ordovas brings *London Painters* to its pristine gallery in London located at 25 Savile Row in Mayfair. *London Painters* explores the essence of the “School of London” a group of luminaries that included Michael Andrews, Frank Auerbach, Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, David Hockney, R.B. Kitaj and Leon Kossoff. It was R.B. Kitaj who promoted the concept of a “School of London” when he organised *The Human Clay* at The Hayward Gallery, London in 1976. “The story of the supposed School of London is a story of friendships, an intimate tale. With that in mind, *London Painters* unites pictures that highlight these relationships and the circles of shared acquaintance, as well as London itself, the city that provided such a thrilling backdrop to so much of their work” says gallery director Pilar Ordovas.

The remarkable exhibition, on view until 28 April 2018, prompts an implicit conversation between artists who arrived at different conclusions on themes related to portrait, figuration and life, at a time when Abstract Expressionism was the dominating path for visual artists.

The exhibition offers a rare opportunity to see works which normally sit in museums’ or private collections. Francis Bacon’s *Fury* c. 1944, relates to *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* from the same year. The vibrant orange background and scary suffering creature evoke the horrors of the Second World War. It is the first painting acquired by the Tate Collection and the first painting which attracted attention from critics and collectors alike. Freud’s 2002 unfinished, ghostly *Self-Portrait* has only been exhibited once before, in the inaugural 2016 Met Breuer show titled *Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible*. This visceral painting has never been publicly displayed in the UK before.

*Man in a Blue Shirt*, 1965, one of two portraits that Freud made of Francis Bacon’s partner, George Dyer remains the highlight of the exhibition. In the exhibition, it is in dialogue with Bacon’s striking *Three Studies of George Dyer*, painted the following year. This is the first time that these two paintings are displayed alongside one another, reflecting both on canvas and outside, the distorted and sometimes violent lives of the triumvirat: Bacon, Dyer and Freud.

*Three Studies of George Dyer* is one of five triptychs that Bacon painted of his troubled lover. Their first meeting has gained legendary status; Dyer, aged 29, attempted to break into and burgle Bacon’s South Kensington studio. Falling through the studio’s skylight, Dyer truly tumbled into Bacon’s life, forever altering the course of the artist’s work. Their relationship was one of extremes, and the full range of emotional and psychological heat seethes and glitters through the richly textured surface of this gem-like triptych. Freud was close to both Bacon and Dyer during this period and witnessed the passionate, but tempestuous, relationship between them. On several occasions, when Bacon and Dyer needed time apart, Freud took Dyer with him to visit his friend Jane, Lady Willoughby de Eresby on her estate in Scotland. It was during one such stay that Freud began to paint this intimate portrait of Bacon’s lover. Lady Willoughby was also a great friend to Michael Andrews – his *Portrait of Jane* is one of the very few portraits that the artist ever painted.

The exhibition coincides with Tate Britain’s *All Too Human: Bacon, Freud and a century of painting life*, an exhibition featuring rarely seen work from the luminaries and their contemporaries including Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Paula Rego, running until August 2018.

